

## Connectivity Standards

This study recommends applying reduced block size and enhanced connectivity standards for large lot development (including redevelopment). This idea is important for improving connectivity and repurposing former large commercial areas such as shopping malls that may need improved connectivity.

Such through-block connections may be a combination of vehicular and pedestrian routes that are privately owned and maintained within a public access easement. For context, here are some typical block sizes for selected Centers:

- Cannon and Maxwell: 330 feet by 280 feet.
- Garland 612 feet by 280 feet (longest block)
- Shadle: 680 feet by 280 feet (blocks on north side of Wellesley Avenue). Note that the Shadle Shopping Center property is more than 1,500 feet long.
- Holy Family: 615 feet by 280 feet (blocks surrounding the hospital)
- Manito: 514 feet by 260 feet (probably the most average sized lot, as the lot sizes in the area are quite variable).
- Lincoln Heights: 600 feet by 280 feet.
- South Perry: 630 feet by 280 feet.

Downtown Spokane blocks, however, are typically around 300 feet long. The 200-300-foot range in blocks is ideal for creating a connected pedestrian environment that helps to reduce the distance between destinations.

Those Centers and Corridors that were developed prior to World War II already have smaller block sizes along with a small lot development pattern. Those Centers and Corridors that could benefit from reduced block size and enhanced connectivity standards are those that were developed after World War II. Most of these include superblock shopping center sites with 600-1,500 long blocks that are often just as wide.

Urban forms of development that feature reduced or structured forms of parking equate to much smaller block sizes in the 200-300-foot range. While breaking up such superblock sites with public streets at such intervals is one attractive option, integrating options for larger blocks, provided they integrate through-block connections, accommodates much needed flexibility.

**Proposal: Maximum block length standards.**

These standards would apply to new large-lot development (sites with blocks more than 300 feet long) or major redevelopment activity on such sites.

**Table 4: Maximum block length standards.**

Zone	Maximum block face length		Maximum block (bound by public streets) perimeter length
	Between public streets and TBC's or between TBC's	Between public streets	
Any MU zone	300'	500'	2,000'

Example street/through-block connection network in the MU zone

The diagram illustrates a grid of streets. Red lines represent public streets, and yellow lines represent through-block connections (TBC). The grid consists of four vertical red lines and four horizontal red lines. A vertical yellow TBC line runs through the second and third vertical red lines. A horizontal yellow TBC line runs through the second and third horizontal red lines. Labels indicate maximum lengths: '500' max' for the vertical yellow TBC segments, '300' max' for the horizontal yellow TBC segments, and '500' max' for the horizontal red public street segments. A legend on the right shows a red bar for 'Public Street' and a yellow bar for 'Through-block connection (TBC)'.

The concept would require some exceptions to account for topography or other physical constraints (such as a large school or park on adjacent sites or an active railroad line). Wider blocks between streets and through-block connections might better match the surrounding context or line up better with current arterial traffic signals. Furthermore, some flexibility might be granted for special permitted uses that require larger block sites or integrate special community amenities.

**Proposal: Through-block connection standards.**

Through-block connections may include private streets, shared pedestrian and vehicular access routes, and other walking and rolling routes. Such connections are encouraged to be integrated into the design of developments to comply with the proposed maximum block size standards and enhance pedestrian circulation in the area, while also providing an option for vehicular access to on-site parking, functioning as a design amenity to new development, and breaking up the massing of buildings on long blocks. Specific regulation suggestions for through-block connections:

- A. **Public access easement.** Where a through-block connection is necessary to meet the maximum block size standards, such connections shall be provided within a public access easement.
- B. **Alignment.** Specific alignments for the through-block connections will be developed during the development review process for applicable sites.
- C. **Accessibility.** Through-block connections must be physically accessible to the public at all times and may take a variety of forms, depending on the block size and use mix.
- D. **Alternative designs.** Adjustments to the through-block connection regulations may be approved by the City provided the design:
  - 1. Creates a safe and welcoming pedestrian-route.
  - 2. Provides an effective transition between the shared lane or path and adjacent uses (e.g., enhances privacy to any adjacent ground-level residential units).
  - 3. Functions as a design amenity to the development.
- E. **Cantilever design.** Buildings may project or cantilever into minimum required easement areas on building levels above the connection provided a 13-foot, six-inch vertical clearance is maintained and all other regulations are met.
- F. **Through-block connection types.** Unless otherwise noted, required through-block connections may take any of the following forms set forth herein. A combination of designs set forth above may be used for each connection.
  - 1. Private street.
    - a. Applicability: The private street option may apply to any through-block connection.
    - b. Design: Private streets shall meet City’s Public Works Standards.
  - 2. Alley design.
    - a. Applicability: The traditional alley design option may apply to any through-block connection.
    - b. Design: Alleys shall meet City’s Public Works Standards.
  - 3. Woonerf design.
    - a. Applicability: The “woonerf” – or shared lane may apply to any through-block connection.
    - b. 32-foot minimum public access easement.

- c. 20-foot wide two-way shared travel lane.
  - d. Landscape planters with a mixture of trees, shrubs, and ground cover must be integrated on at least one side of the shared-lane.
  - e. Apply those same proposed ground level/façade block frontage standards above that apply to undesignated streets.
4. **Landscaped passageway design.**
- a. Applicability: Optional design when vehicular access to the site is provided elsewhere on the site.
  - b. 30-foot minimum public access easement.
  - c. Eight foot minimum walking path in commercial, multifamily, and civic contexts and five feet minimum in single unit and duplex subdivisions.
  - d. Six-foot minimum landscaping strips (with a mixture of trees, shrubs, and ground cover) on each side of the walking path.
  - e. Apply those same proposed ground level/façade block frontage standards above that apply to undesignated streets.
5. **Urban passage design.**
- a. Applicability: Optional design for commercial or mixed-use areas when vehicular access to the site is provided elsewhere on the site and active ground level uses are provided along frontages.
  - b. Twelve-foot minimum public access easement.
  - c. Apply those same proposed ground level/façade block frontage standards above that apply to undesignated streets.